IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An inflatable hose system comprising first and second hose lengths ~~adapted to be~~ each having opposed ends comprising a first flattened and sealed end and a second end provided with one part of a two part coupling, such that the two hose lengths may be detachably coupled together~~, and end-sealed thus to be inflatable, and including~~ with or without the interposition of one or more additional lengths of standard hose to form an airtight continuous hose for use as a rigid floatable boom, and an inflation valve connected to at least one of the first and second hose lengths thus to enable inflation of said airtight continuous hose.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) An inflatable hose system according to Claim 1, wherein the inflation valve is mounted in the wall of one of the hose lengths.

4. (Currently Amended) An inflatable hose system according to Claim [[2]] 1, wherein ~~the or~~ each flattened and sealed end includes a superimposed rigid plate and includes means for attachment thereto of a line or shackle.

5. (Currently Amended) An inflatable hose system according to Claim [[2]] 1, wherein the or each flattened end is sealed with a bonding agent and is vulcanised, with a pair of opposed plates bolted together through the flattened and vulcanised hose end.

6. (Currently Amended) An inflatable hose system according to Claim [[2]] 1, wherein the or each coupling part includes a valve to enable the associated hose length to be

sealed after inflation.

7. (Currently Amended) An inflatable hose system according to Claim [[3]] 1, wherein the inflation valve comprises an inner sleeve and an outer sleeve threadedly connected together, the inner sleeve having a spigot which passes through an aperture in the hose wall, and a clamping washer being interposed between the inner and outer sleeves and having annular protrusions which serve to trap the wall of the hose between the inner and outer sleeves.

8. (Currently Amended) An inflatable hose system according to Claim 7, including an elbow connector threadedly engaged within [[the]] a bore of the inner sleeve and including a one-way pressure relief valve.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) An inflatable hose system according to claim 1, including an inflation unit comprising a pressure regulator, a pressure relief valve and selectable valve means to permit deflation of ~~the hose system~~ said airtight continuous hose.

11. (Currently Amended) An inflation unit according to Claim [[9]] 10, wherein the pressure regulator is adapted to inflate the hose system to a pressure in the range 2 to 3.5 bar.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a rigid floatable boom comprising the steps of providing an inflatable hose system comprising first and second hose

lengths each having ~~one end sealed~~ opposed ends comprising a first flattened and sealed end and a second end provided with one part of a two-part coupling, detachably coupling [[the]] said hose lengths together, with or without the interposition of one ore more additional lengths of standard hose, to form an airtight continuous hose and inflating ~~the coupled~~ said airtight continuous hose ~~lengths to a pressure sufficient for them to become rigid such that they may be pushed from one end across the surface of water without submerging~~ through an inflation valve connected to at least one of the first and second hose lengths to form said rigid floatable boom.

13. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 12, wherein the sealed end of at least one of the hose lengths is flattened to become chisel-shaped whereby the hose will ride across the surface of [[the]] a body of water easily and rapidly without submerging.

14. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 12, including the step of interposing one or more further lengths of ~~open ended~~ standard hose between the first and second hose lengths thus to extend the length of the ~~system~~ airtight continuous hose.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 14, wherein one or each of said coupling parts includes a valve to enable the associated hose length to be sealed and to thus to enable the attachment of the or each further length of standard hose ~~is attached to one of the first and second~~ to the hose ~~lengths~~ length associated with the said valve after inflation thereof.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 12, wherein the coupled hose lengths are inflated to a pressure in the range of 2 to 3.5 bar.